

CITY OF MEMPHIS / NEWS / WHAT'S NEW / MAYOR STRICKLAND'S
WEEKLY UPDATE: JUNE 1, 2018

Weekly Update: U.S. Attorney partnership aids crime fight

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Friends,

That's the goal!!

To truly see the long-term reductions in crime that we all want for our city, it's imperative that we utilize all the law enforcement resources at our disposal.

Today, I want to highlight the good work that's happening as the result of the strengthened partnership between the Memphis Police Department and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Tennessee. Under U.S. Attorney Michael Dunavant, prosecutions of violent crimes in the federal system — such as carjackings, firearm offenses and robberies — have greatly increased.

In the 2016 fiscal year (October 2015-September 2016), the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted 106 such cases. In the 2017 fiscal year, that number rose to 281. And just through April of this fiscal year, with five months to go, the U.S. Attorney's Office office has already prosecuted 332 such cases.

In the past week or so alone, a federal judge sentenced a man to 27 years in prison for a 2016 armed robbery of an armored truck, sentenced another man to 20 years for armed robberies of dollar stores, and sentenced a gang member to more than three years on a firearms conviction.

The firearms conviction was a direct result of the work of the Multi-Agency Gang Unit, of which MPD is an active partner. MPD has been a major link in many of these aggressive federal prosecutions, particularly when they involve gangs. After another large class of graduating police officers earlier this year boosted our officer count, we were able to assign more officers to our gang unit. (Also, the Shelby County Sheriff has assigned more deputies to the same unit.)

This is part of our Fed Up initiative, which is showing results — both with the numbers above and our encouraging crime statistics thus far in 2018. When the Crime Commission posted its first quarter numbers a few weeks back, it showed violent crime fell 5 percent and murders fell 38 percent. ! /

No one is celebrating this as “mission accomplished.” We all know there’s more work ahead of us. We continue our aggressive, holistic anti-crime strategy.

Here’s a quick refresher on that:

- **Rebuild MPD.** Both with aggressive recruiting and retention strategies, we’re working every day to climb back toward our goal of roughly 2,300 officers. We just had our first net annual gain of officers in seven years, another class is training at the academy as I write this, and police officer departures are again lower this year than both our goal and our five-year average.
- **Offer more for our youth.** We highlighted this at length last week, but we have returned staffed activities to our parks, made community center camps free, greatly increased library programming, and added youth summer jobs. This is all about paving the paths to opportunity for our young people.
- **Increase economic development.** The numbers here are good — historically low unemployment and 15,000 more Memphians working than in January 2016 — but can always be better. This week, in fact, we launched a new initiative designed to even further empower minority businesses. And we continue to tout the unique opportunities Memphians have — particularly with free community and technical

college in Tennessee and more than 16,000 current job openings in our community.

- **Offer second chances.** We've raised private money to pay for about 150 expungements for non-violent felons so they can more easily re-enter the workforce. And, we supported a new state law that lowers expungement fees.
- **Seek stiffer sentences for violent crime.** We lobbied for a new state law to increase penalties for felons in possession of guns, and we've also worked — as highlighted above — with the U.S. Attorney to ensure violent criminals are prosecuted in the federal system, which has tougher penalties.

The message is clear: If you're willing to take personal responsibility, we're here to help. If not, and if you commit a violent crime, we're here to ensure you're punished to the fullest extent of the law.

It's that simple.

Sharing the state of Memphis: I was honored to be invited to Washington. D.C. Wednesday as part of the National League of Cities' 2018 State of the Cities program. Each year, NLC researchers study State of the City addresses from across the country as a way of viewing mayoral priorities. I'm honored our speech from January caught their eye.

I wanted to share what drew the attention of the panel discussion moderator — so much so, in fact, that it framed her first question to me. It was this line: "We don't get involved in the partisan politics of the day, or the shouting matches that far too often define politics these days. You probably know by now that's not my style. Our team shuts up, rolls up its sleeves and takes action."

Memphians elected me to solve problems. We have much more work ahead of us, but I hope you can see our dedication to that goal, every single day.

Yours,

